

'Varied Barrie' offered at Alfred University

9/26/05

Two works by Scottish playwright Sir James M. Barrie will open Alfred University's theater season. "The Old Lady Shows Her Medals" and "The Twelve Pound Look" will be performed in the C.D. Smith Theatre of the Miller Performing Arts Center Oct. 5-8 at 8 p.m. These two short plays, written by the author of the children's classic, "Peter Pan", are rich with wit and suffused with irony, says Dr. Becky Prophet, professor of theatre and director. A recurrent theme in Barrie's life and works is loneliness, and, in contrast, warmth and sentimentality with genuine connection, explained Prophet. In *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*, as in the much earlier *Peter Pan*, Barrie uses the metaphor of loneliness and lack of sturdy family ties to recreate social norms in unexpected contexts. As four old ladies, charwomen by trade, gather to swap tales of their sons' heroic deeds in war, only Mrs. Dowey, the hostess, is committing the "crime" of making up a son that doesn't exist. To our delight and hers, such a son actually arrives on the scene and the two strangers, indeed, work out a relationship that is richly rewarding for both and sardonically satisfying for the audience. Senior history major Sara Schnick from Manchester, NH, plays Mrs. Dowey. Her faux son is created by Jeffrey Baxter, a first year student from Lansing, NY. The other charwomen are played by Hailley Field, a senior sociology major from Malvern, PA; Jaimie Pinkham, a junior theater major from Ellsworth, ME, and Amanda Holland, a first year student from Lakewood, OH. Logan Kjep, a sophomore art student from Sherman, CN rounds out the cast as the character of Mr. Barrie, himself and the one who connects the total strangers as mother and son. Irony dominates *The Twelve Pound Look*, said Prophet. A man and a woman, disconnected years ago, are briefly reunited at the time of a moment of glory for the ex-husband. With dialogue fired by the rhythms of rapid typing, this 1910 comedy explores the potential and pitfalls of women's liberation and class struggle. The route each person takes through such a verbal landscape turns back on them in the end and we are privy to their foibles, even as we comprehend Barrie's love of humanity portrayed through paradox. Senior English major Megan Shove of Coxsackie, NY plays Kate, a woman who is making her own way in the world. Her estranged husband is played John Kalish, a junior math major from Newburgh, NY. Amanda Lucas, a first year student from Roslyn, NY plays the sweet and unassuming present wife. Mr. Barrie, himself also makes an appearance in this play. Directed by Prophet, the two plays are stage managed by Laura Jantzi of Eden, NY, assisted by Carrie Steere of Almond, NY. *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals* is set in a rather grim cellar room in London. *The Twelve Pound Look* takes place in a luxurious home near London. The scenery for "Varied Barrie" is designed by Sean O'Skea; lighting is created by sophomore theatre major Courtney Rawleigh from Rochester, NY. These genteel and sprightly comedies are a perfect outing for Alfred's crisp fall days of early October. Reservations are recommended for this evening of Barrie plays, being performed Wednesday through Saturday, October 5-8. For reservations and further ticket information, call 871-2828 or visit the website: <http://las.alfred.edu/per...>